

**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE, 4 Dec 01**  
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**MICHIGAN DNR SEEKS INPUT ON  
OLD GROWTH/BIODIVERSITY STEWARDSHIP PROCESS**

**LANSING--**The Michigan Department of Natural Resources is seeking public comment on criteria and guidelines to be used for identifying old growth and biological diversity areas on state-owned lands.

The DNR has formed a public advisory committee, consisting of representatives of industry and environmental groups, that will provide formal recommendations on this process, but the department also seeks input from other interested individuals. The public comment period ends Feb. 28, 2002.

"Old growth" describes an ecological condition where forest vegetation is dominated by trees in the mature stages of their life cycle. Michigan's old growth, however, consists of more than just big trees. The state's diverse forest landscape contains a variety of species and topography.

"Maintaining a healthy diversity of ecosystems, species and genetic material is an important aspect of good resource management," said Cara Boucher, DNR Forest Resource Management Section Manager. "The intent of the old growth and biodiversity stewardship process is to identify parcels of state land that represent these varying conditions."

The report, released earlier this year by the Natural Resources Commission, is entitled "Proposed Old Growth and Biodiversity Stewardship Planning Process and Draft Criteria for Michigan's State Forests and Other State-Owned Lands." The 42-page document is available on the DNR Web site. To request a paper copy, contact Margaret Spagnuolo at 517-335-3352; [spagnuom@michigan.gov](mailto:spagnuom@michigan.gov).

Public comments may be sent via e-mail to [DNR-FMFM-OGBS@michigan.gov](mailto:DNR-FMFM-OGBS@michigan.gov), or mailed to the DNR Forest, Mineral and Fire Management Division, c/o Old Growth and Biodiversity Stewardship, Box 30452, Lansing, MI 48909.

Once the draft criteria and guidelines are approved, the process will move forward to identify and select state-owned land that could be included in an old growth and biodiversity stewardship network. This selection phase also will include opportunities for public involvement at the state, regional and local level.

For more information on the old growth and biodiversity stewardship planning process, contact Richard Hausler at 517-335-3351; [hauslerr@michigan.gov](mailto:hauslerr@michigan.gov).